



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

# Presquile National Wildlife Refuge

*Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan  
and Environmental Assessment*

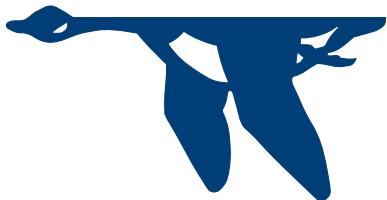
*August 2012*



*Front cover:*

*Waterfowl at Presquile National Wildlife Refuge*

Cyrus Brame/USFWS



*This blue goose, designed by  
J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become  
the symbol of the National Wildlife  
Refuge System.*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of over 150 million acres including 555 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas. The Service also operates 70 national fish hatcheries and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance Program which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs) provide long-term guidance for management decisions on a refuge and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes. CCPs also identify the Service's best estimate of future needs. These plans detail program levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning and program prioritization purposes. CCPs do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.



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## **Presquile Refuge Vision Statement**

Presquile National Wildlife Refuge exemplifies the majesty of our natural world and the significance of the Lower James River as a major tributary of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Throughout the year, bald eagles perch on the island's forested shores and survey the rich assemblage of wildlife: the wake of the prehistoric sturgeon heading to spawn each spring, basking turtles in the warm spring sun, colorful warblers darting amongst trees all summer, and thousands of wintering waterfowl resting in the quiet waters of the winding river.

This isolated island bridges the modern world to its long and storied history of people connecting to the land. The joyful sound of children learning in the natural classroom echoes through the forest in this gateway to wild places. Stewardship fostered here generates action beyond the river in communities across their watershed.



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## Summary

<b>Type of Action:</b>	Administrative—Development of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan
<b>Lead Agency:</b>	U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
<b>Location:</b>	Presquile National Wildlife Refuge Chesterfield County, Virginia
<b>Administrative Headquarters:</b>	Eastern Virginia Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Complex Warsaw, Virginia
<b>Responsible Official:</b>	Wendi Weber, Regional Director, Region 5
<b>For Further Information:</b>	Meghan Carfioli, Natural Resource Planner Eastern Virginia Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Complex Charles City Sub-office 11116 Kimages Rd Charles City, VA 23030 (804) 829-5413 <a href="mailto:EasternVirginiaRiversNWRC@fws.gov">EasternVirginiaRiversNWRC@fws.gov</a>

This Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment analyzes two alternatives for managing the 1,329-acre Presquile National Wildlife Refuge (NWR, the refuge) over the next 15 years. This document also contains five appendixes that provide additional information supporting our analysis. Following is a brief overview of each alternative:

**Alternative A—Current Management:** Alternative A satisfies the National Environmental Policy Act requirement of a “no action” alternative, which we define as “continuing current management.” It describes our existing management priorities and activities for Presquile NWR, and serves as a baseline for comparing and contrasting alternative B.

**Alternative B—Focus on Species of Conservation Concern:** Alternative B is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)-preferred alternative. It combines the actions we believe would best achieve the refuge’s purposes, vision and goals; address issues and concerns identified throughout the planning process; respond to public comments and inquiries; and is feasible to implement in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and guidance.

## *Summary*

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Under alternative B, we would emphasize the conservation, restoration, and monitoring of specific refuge habitats to support priority refuge species whose habitat needs benefit other species of conservation concern in eastern Virginia, including those identified in the Virginia Wildlife Action Plan. In particular, we emphasize protecting, restoring, and monitoring the refuge's tidal freshwater marsh, tidal swamp forest, and mixed mesic forest habitats. We would promote natural forest succession on a portion of refuge land that is currently being managed as grassland. Our activities would include regularly evaluating and adapting our actions in conjunction with monitoring climate change impacts, including sea level rise.

We would also increase and enhance opportunities for appropriate and compatible public uses on the refuge through partnerships.

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